



# Eureka Fire Department

## 2009 4th Quarter Report

### Chief's Report

Chief Eric M. Smith



It is my pleasure to welcome you to Eureka Fire's new Quarterly Report format. This format is intended to allow our readers to learn about the issues and happenings of your fire department from various members, not just your chief officers. Over the next few months our new format will evolve and grow into a document that meets our informative goals.

The fourth quarter of 2009 proved to be another challenging time for the department. Just as we were beginning to gain momentum in meeting FY 09-10 goals and objectives, the momentum was lost due to the mid-year budget review indicating a projected General Fund short fall of close to 10% or \$600,000 to EFD. Since that time, we have delayed filling vacancies or moving forward on a number of items. It is my hope that we will find some form of financial stability soon as the annual budget process once a year is painful enough, let alone multiple times a year.

Despite the pressures restricting progress, the department was able to make strides in a number of areas. In partnership with Michele Olson, EPD/EFD Communications Supervisor, we developed a back-up dispatching protocol with Cal-Fire's Emergency Command Center. This partnership will provide the redundancy of a back-up Fire Dispatch plan that we

have long needed. We continued to work on reducing costs of operations by switching from alpha-pagers to text messaging devices for our personnel, effectively reducing the cost of recalling our personnel in half. We renewed our Rescues Services contract with the PG&E Power plant, ensuring the continued revenue from this contract for several more years.

The current fiscal challenges continue to be of great concern. Adding to the complexity of this issue, is the fact that for many years we have been underfunded by approximately \$500,000 per year. Our apparatus, equipment, protective clothing, and facilities are not in a condition that allow us to "make due" for a few more years, but we have no choice but to defer replacement and maintenance. The great challenges we faced this past year appear to be minor compared to what our future holds.

It is my hope that you enjoy the new format and that you will "stay/tuned" and watch it evolve over the next few months.

### Operations

Asst. Chief Bill Gillespie

### Training Report

The 4th quarter has been busy, productive, and transformative in terms of our internal training and our relationship with Humboldt Fire District #1. Within my new responsibilities of Joint Training Officer I have spent a significant amount of my time learning Humboldt Fire District's apparatus, policies and procedures, training programs, and most importantly, their personnel. Office space is a significant issue at Station 11 and currently I am without office space at that station. There does not seem to be enough hours in the day to accomplish everything that needs to be done but the work so far has been interesting and challenging and I have received great support from their personnel.

In the 4th quarter we began to see the fruits of our labor with three candidates from the Company Officer Academy completing their internships and working as first-line engine company supervisors. I anticipate three more candidates coming on line in the next few months.

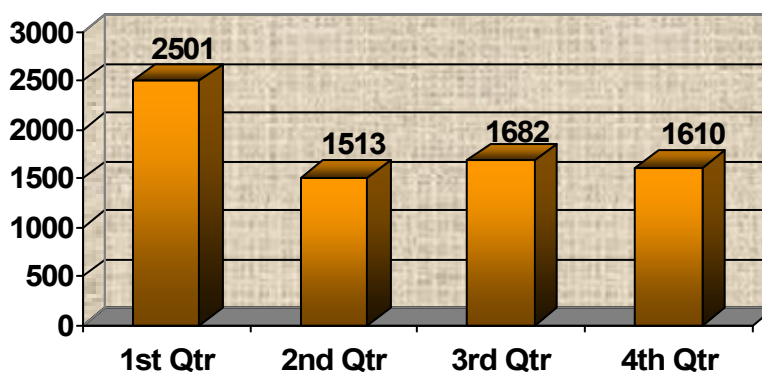
## **Training Report, continued**

This has also been a busy quarter for scheduling of outside/ State Fire Training courses. We are scheduled to host Instructor 1A, 1B, and 1C, Fire Control 3B, and "Inspirational Leadership for the Company Officer", a one-day course that focuses on leadership skills for the engine company captain or company officer.

Grant funding via a State Homeland Security Grant has been secured to complete the training component of the OES "Type 2 Medium Rescue Cache Project". We will have funding available to run two local trench rescue courses and send 12 or more students to take Rescue Systems 2 in the early spring.

***Chris Jelinek, EFD/HFD#1 Joint Training Officer***

### **2009 Training Hours**



## **EMS Report**

I gave a presentation at the October Company Officers meeting about H1N1. H1N1, often called the "Swine Flu" was rapidly spreading throughout America, and there was a very real concern about how the flu would affect emergency service providers. Following the meeting I worked on scheduling and finding availability for the Fire Department personnel to get H1N1 vaccinations. Most members who chose to receive the vaccination did so during November. Eureka Fire Department did see personnel ill with H1N1. Though most employees absent with the flu were not tested by their physicians, most were treated as though they had H1N1, as that was the flu strain prevalent at the time. Six to eight personnel were absent during the months of October and November with suspected H1N1, and one confirmed case of H1N1 was diagnosed. I worked with Assistant Chief Gillespie to provide information to the department and the City of Eureka.

To help address the transmission of germ spread, dishwashers were purchased for Fire Station 3 & 4, with the Station 4 unit installed by city staff. The unit at Station 3 is planned to be installed shortly after the first of the year. Assistant Chiefs Rusty Goodlive and Bill Gillespie began development of a draft plan in October to help the fire department identify chains of succession within the organization, vendor information for supplies and services both in house and through other parts of the city in the event that key City of Eureka personnel were ill.

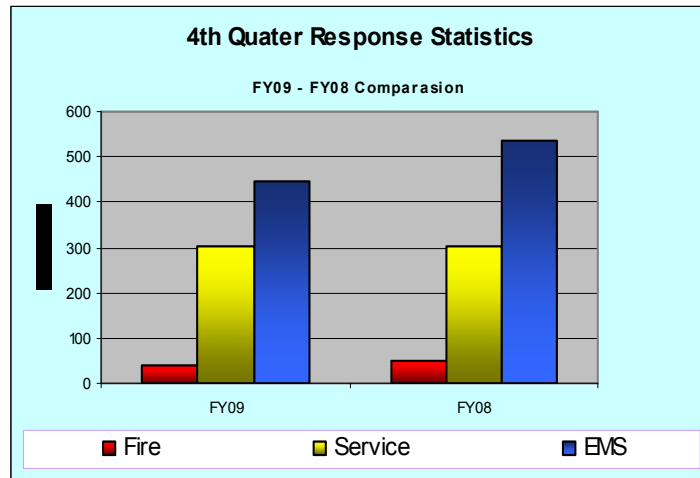
***Captain P.J. Lynch***



## **Incident Activity**



During the quarter, EFD responded to 23 structure fires, with an estimated loss of \$511,500. Emergency Medical Service (EMS) Incidents, including minor and major medical aids and traffic collisions accounted for 447 incidents. These figures come from Firehouse data provided for the quarter.



## **Equipment**

### ***Respiratory Protection Program***

Bench testing of our fleet of SCBA's continued during the fourth quarter. Many of the units were found to require minor but necessary repairs. In most cases, parts were required to be removed and then sent back to Scott for warranty return, placing the unit out of service for more than two weeks. To work to keep units in service, I presented a plan to purchase a small supply of the most common warranty replacement parts to keep on hand, thus allowing the part to be switched, the unit returned to service, and the replacement part from Scott being placed back into the parts supply. So far it appears that this process is working, and allowing more SCBA's to be returned to service.

Face fit training was completed on November 2, 2009 with Engineer Lahargoue, Captain Flynn, FF Campillo and myself attending. Face fit testing has been completed for all personnel for SCBA masks. Face fit testing of N95 masks will be conducted following the arrival of a remaining part to allow such testing.

***Captain Ken Weaver***

### ***Wildland Equipment***

Our current inventory of wildland fire shelters will become non-compliant as of December 31, 2009. Their replacement will be necessary if EFD is to continue its OES agreement, and mutual aid responses to wildland incidents. Personnel with non-compliant protective equipment will not be allowed to participate in State or Federal wildland suppression activities. An AFG grant for wild land gear was submitted for FY 2009. If an award is received it will be used for next year's season. The budgeted match for the grant, plus the additional cost to outfit the apparatus of the department is reimbursable in the event that we are successfully award our grant, per contract with AFG. The department received a variety of Web Gear for demo purposes. The new gear is designed to accommodate the new generation fire shelters. I have been requesting quotes from vendors for the new generation fire shelter in size large, along with quotes for two styles of web gear; one similar to our current gear, and a slightly more expensive yet superior construction model.

***Engineer Ben Miller***

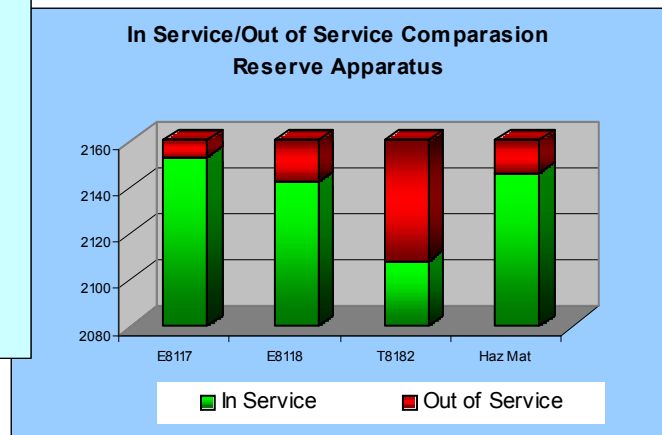
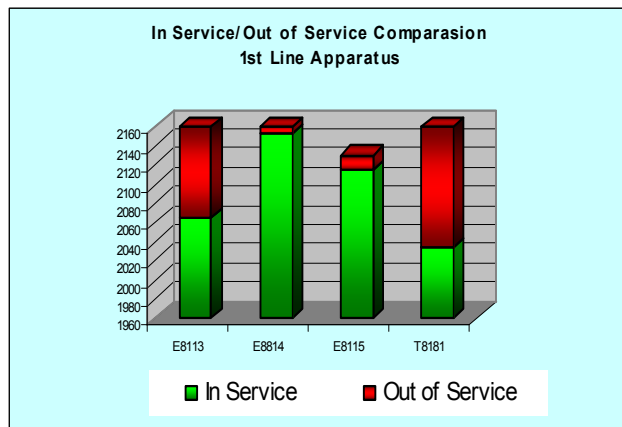
## Apparatus

I worked to research standards for securing the hose bed and live line covers to help hold the hose and attached nozzle in place following the deployment of an entire hose bed by one of our allied agency neighbors recently. Initial research shows a cost of approximately \$225 per apparatus to fabricate and install straps and/or covers over the end of all apparatus hose beds and live lines. Completion will be budget dependant.



During the quarter, Captain Bakke reported on apparatus mileage and out of services hours. The Pierce Truck 8181 spent the most time out of service, with 126.5 hours spent at the Corp Yard. Some of the issues repaired included leaking valves, including one which allowed the tank to drain down over the period of a night.

**Captain Mike Bakke**



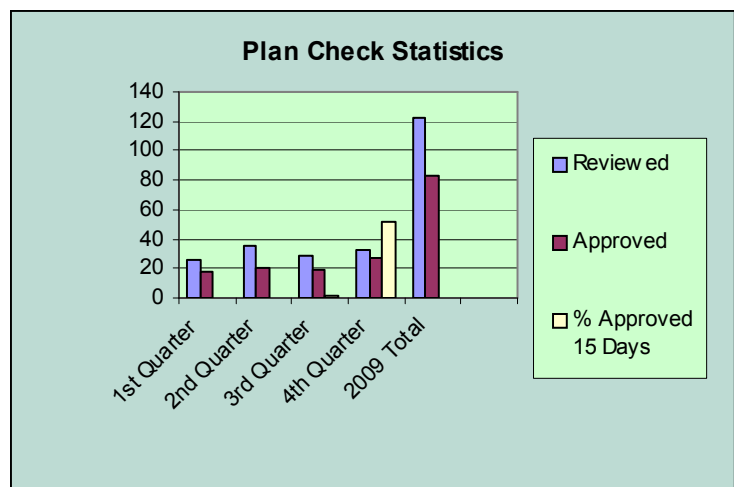
## Prevention

**Asst. Chief Rusty Goodlive**

The prevention bureau remained busy during the fourth and final quarter of 2009. Activities included the continuing development of our current and future prevention staff, project review (Plan Check) and related filed inspections, enforcement and education activities.

## Developer Support

The most significant construction project in the City remains St Joseph's Hospital. We continue to work with the contractor to ensure that they meet their timelines, while at the same time ensuring that the fire and life safety systems are maintained. Since this is an addition to the existing complex, we are working diligently with the Hospital to ensure that the entire complex will be 100% fire sprinklered over the next few years.





## **Training**

As part of the department succession planning efforts, effective July 1, 2010, Captain II Ed Laidlaw will rotate into fire prevention and Captain II Chris Emmons will rotate back into suppression. In preparation for this transition, we are focusing on Ed's development so that he is adequately prepared to take on this new assignment.

## **Abatement Issues**

Your prevention bureau continues to work with independently and with the City's Community Improvement Team to resolve a number of issues. Current activities include our working to resolve a number of "hoarding" related issues and properties. Hoarding presents not only fire and life safety issues including an increased chance of fire, it at the same time can severely limit one's ability to exit the building and add to the fire loading of the building. It can additionally add poise a number of health and vector related issues that can affect and entire neighborhood.

## **Fire Investigations**

During the fourth quarter, the most significant fire occurred on New Year's Eve at the Greyhound Hotel. To-date, the cause of this fire remains undetermined. The department continues to work with a new group of fire investigators and we would like to commend Firefighters Neal Butler, Tony Freeman, and Yolla Montalbin for the effort and dedication they have put forth in this endeavor. On a positive note, an individual was arrested on an arson charge related to a fire that occurred in the 1300 block of McCullens Avenue.

## **Indoor Marijuana Grows**

With indoor marijuana grows currently being a hot topic within our community, it is important to note that Eureka Fire was called in by the Eureka Police to evaluate the safety related aspects of indoor grows over the fourth quarter. In two of these cases, the conditions presented by the electrical system was serious enough that we have the local utility company respond and pull the electrical meter to immediately eliminate the electrical hazard. At the same time, we continue to work with the City Council in their efforts to resolve or eliminate the fire potential associated with marijuana grows.



## **Public Education and Events**

Our annual open house was on October 10<sup>th</sup>. While attendance appeared to be down the event itself went smoothly and was considered a great success. This single opportunity is our departments one chance to interact with the community in a proactive educative manner, an element that we hope to improve upon over time and our public education capabilities are less than desirable.

